

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of inhibiting growth of cancer cells in a patient, comprising: administering to said patient an effective amount of an antagonist of STAT<sub>3</sub> (signal transducer and activator of transcription) signaling,

wherein said antagonist antagonizes STAT<sub>3</sub> homodimer DNA binding; and

wherein said antagonist noncovalently binds to a STAT<sub>3</sub> polypeptide; and

wherein said antagonist is a peptide having a length of 3 to 12 amino acids comprising

SEQ ID NO: 20, SEQ ID NO: 22, SEQ ID NO: 24, SEQ ID NO: 25, SEQ ID NO: 26,

SEQ ID NO: 27, SEQ ID NO: 28, SEQ ID NO: 30, SEQ ID NO: 31, SEQ ID NO: 32,

SEQ ID NO: 34, SEQ ID NO: 35, SEQ ID NO: 36, SEQ ID NO: 37, or SEQ ID NO: 38.

2. – 18. (cancelled).

19. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said antagonist of STAT<sub>3</sub> homodimer DNA binding disrupts SH2-pY interactions between the SH2 domain of one STAT<sub>3</sub> polypeptide monomer and a pY on another STAT<sub>3</sub> polypeptide monomer.

20. – 21. (cancelled).

22. (currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein said antagonist of STAT<sub>3</sub> DNA binding is a peptide that binds to full-length STAT<sub>3</sub>.

23. (currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein said antagonist of STAT<sub>3</sub> DNA binding is a peptide that binds the SH2 domain of STAT<sub>3</sub>.

24. – 32. (cancelled).

33. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said STAT<sub>3</sub> polypeptide is monomeric.

34. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said STAT<sub>3</sub> polypeptide is dimeric.